

AFFIDAVIT

I, Cynthia Moore #1277, Detective with the Cleveland, Ohio Police Department, currently assigned to the Cartel Gang Narcotics and Laundering Task Force (hereinafter, referred to as CGNL) as a Task Force Officer (hereinafter, referred to as TFO) with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (hereinafter, referred to as FBI), hereinafter, referred to as Affiant, being duly sworn, do depose and state that:

INTRODUCTION

1. As a TFO of the FBI, your Affiant is an investigative or law enforcement officer of the United States within the meaning of 18 U.S.C. § 2510(7). Your Affiant is empowered to conduct investigations and to make arrests for offenses enumerated in Section 2516 of Title 18, United States Code.

2. Your Affiant has been employed by the Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) since October 15th, 2007. Affiant has been assigned to the Cleveland Division of Police Narcotics Unit, and the FBI, Cartel Gang Narcotics and Laundering Task Force (hereinafter, referred to as CGNL), as a TFO since February 2021. As a narcotics officer, your Affiant has participated in street level narcotics enforcement, and the dismantlement of mid to upper level drug trafficking organizations. Your Affiant is currently assigned to CGNL, a Cleveland area, multi-agency federal, state, and local law enforcement entity. Your Affiant has received field training in drug related investigative techniques, which include, but are not limited to, surveillance, interview and interrogation techniques, informant recruitment and control, search warrant and case preparation and has previously participated in TIII wiretap investigations. Your Affiant has participated in several undercover operations involving various drug trafficking targets. Prior to this assignment, your Affiant was assigned to RAVEN a parole based fugitive task force for one year. Prior to that, spent

7 years in the Second District Detective Bureau where she has participated in the investigations of thousands of individuals for violations of the Laws of the State of Ohio, including numerous felony cases as well as drug investigations. These crimes were prosecuted in both state and federal court. As a Detective in the Narcotics Unit and TFO with the CGNL, your Affiant has participated in and conducted investigations involving narcotics activities and activities involving other illicit, non-narcotic controlled substances. These investigations have resulted in arrests of individuals who have manufactured, smuggled, received, and distributed controlled substances, including heroin, fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine, and marijuana, as well as the seizure of controlled substances and the proceeds of the sale of those controlled substances. In addition, Affiant has conducted investigations concerning the concealment of narcotics and other proceeds, including assets, monies, bank records, and the identification of co-conspirators through the use of drug ledgers, phone records, bills, photographs, and financial records.

3. Affiant has participated in investigations involving the interception of wire communications, body recordings, and video surveillance. Affiant has also participated in and executed numerous search and seizure warrants authorizing the search of locations of drug traffickers, their co-conspirators and vehicles used to transport controlled substances. Materials searched for and recovered in these locations have included controlled substances, packaging materials, scales, cutting agents, weapons, documents, papers, electronic files and media reflecting the identity of co-conspirators, receipts for concealed investments, and proceeds derived from the distribution of controlled substances. During these investigations, Affiant also has participated in interviewing witnesses and cooperating sources regarding illegal trafficking in controlled substances and has read official reports of similar interviews by other officers.

4. Your Affiant has participated has supervised the activities of informants who have

provided information concerning controlled substances and organized criminal activities, purchased controlled substances, and supervised consensual monitoring in connection with these investigations.

5. Your Affiant has been involved in numerous investigations and arrests, drafting and executing search warrants, coordinating undercover purchases of controlled substances and supervising the activities of informants who have provided information concerning the activities of drug traffickers. Your Affiant is familiar with the terminology and techniques used by persons involved in these criminal activities, including the illicit distribution of controlled substances, the *modus operandi* of persons involved with such acts, including the knowledge that persons involved in the criminal activity.

6. I have personally participated in the investigation set forth below. I am familiar with the facts and circumstances of the investigation through my personal participation; from discussions with other agents and law enforcement officers; from my discussions with witnesses involved in the investigation; and from my review of records and reports relating to the investigation. Unless otherwise noted, wherever in this Affidavit I assert that a statement was made, the information was provided by my personal observation, by another Special Agent, law enforcement officer or witness who had either direct or hearsay knowledge of that statement and to whom I or others have spoken or whose reports I have read and reviewed. Affiant has not included each and every fact known to her concerning this investigation. Rather, Affiant has set forth only the facts Affiant believes are necessary to establish probable cause.

PURPOSE OF AFFIDAVIT

7. This affidavit is submitted in support of a criminal complaint charging JOEL

VALDEZ (hereinafter, "VALDEZ") with the offense of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a), distribution and possession with intent to distribute controlled substances in the Northern District of Ohio, Eastern Division.

FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES SUPPORTING PROBABLE CAUSE

8. VALDEZ has been previously arrested for Alien Smuggling March 11, 2024, by Customs and Border Patrol in California.

9. On November 25, 2024, The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and The Cartel, Gang, Narcotics and Laundering Task Force (CGNL) received information from management of the Cube Smart, 2000 Brookpark Road, Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, State of Ohio, that a male entered the facility after reserving a storage unit on line. Management assisted the male with a rental of a 5x10x8 unit. Management assisted the male to Unit 1061.

10. Investigators learned that the male provided his name JOEL VALDEZ (d.o.b. 07/19/2001), the address of 3858 Countryaire Drive, Ayden, North Carolina, 28513, phone number (951) 228-8151. Management provided a license plate for JOEL VALDEZ vehicle LCF6898 (registered to JOEL VALDEZ 3858 Countryaire Drive, Ayden, North Carolina, 28513) Affiant avers that VALDEZ rented the aforementioned storage locker for one (1) month¹.

11. Investigators learned that that on January 18, 2025, VALDEZ accessed his Cube Smart unit # 1061 and removed two suitcases, a clear tote with a blue lid and a red cooler. Furthermore, VALDEZ did not lock the unit.

12. On January 21, 2025, CGNL Investigators established surveillance on VALDEZ vehicle, a blue F-150 North Carolina plate LCF6898, parked at an Extended Stay America located at 6025 Jefferson Drive, Independence, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, 44131.

¹ Valdez called in and re-upped the unit on December 26, 2024.

13. At approximately 12:35 p.m. Investigators observed VALDEZ exit the rear door of the Extended Stay and get into his vehicle that was parked in the lot.

14. Investigators followed VALDEZ on I 77 Southbound to the Broadview Heights exit. VALDEZ pulled into a gas station and put air in his tire, VALDEZ was observed looking around at all the vehicles in the lot, which based upon Your Affiant's training and experience appeared to be him looking to see if anyone was following him.

15. Investigators then followed VALDEZ back to I 77 South where he was driving erratically in and out of traffic at a high rate of speed consistent with counter surveillance maneuvers.

16. Due to the highly dangerous manner in which VALDEZ was driving, CGNL Investigators contacted Ohio State Highway Patrol (herein after OSP) and notified them of their safety concerns regarding his driving. Affiant further avers that based upon the location provided that OSP officers were able to locate the vehicle being driven by VALDEZ and independently determined that the high rate of speed that he was traveling and following too closely to other vehicles justified a traffic stop.

17. OSP conducted a traffic stop on VALDEZ at which time he initially pulled over. During the stop while Troopers were out of their vehicles VALDEZ took off at a high rate of speed.

18. OSP pursued VALDEZ and observed VALDEZ throw a black plastic bag out of the driver side window while fleeing. Investigators were able to locate the plastic bag that was thrown from the vehicle. The aforementioned bag was NIK² tested and was positive for the presence of cocaine. This bag is consistent with bags drug traffickers utilize to package kilo's

² NIK is a filed drug test kit.

commonly referred to as a kilo casket.

19. OSP eventually was able to effect a traffic stop on VALDEZ at which time VALDEZ exited his vehicle and was observed breaking his cell phone with his hands.

20. OSP located the red cooler containing baggies with suspected cocaine residue, a Romarm Micro Draco 7.62 caliber pistol (Serial No. 23 PMD-42816) and a Taurus GX4 9 mm caliber pistol (Serial No. 1GC40575) in the backseat of his vehicle. Affiant avers that the suspected residue inside the bags was NIK tested and was positive for Cocaine. Investigators observed white powder all over VALDEZ hands which NIK tested positive for cocaine.

21. Investigators issued a subpoena to Extended Stay America Premier Suites, 6025 Jefferson Drive, Independence, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, 44131. Investigators learned from the records received that no one by the name of JOEL VALDEZ had rented a room. However, learned that PEDRO VALDEZ rented room 605. Law enforcement database search revealed that PEDRO VALDEZ is the father of JOEL VALDEZ. Furthermore, due to many hotels and extended stays requiring photo ID to be shown when rooms are rented based on her training and experience those involved in the trafficking of illegal narcotics will provide identification of family members in an attempt to conceal their identity from law enforcement.

22. On January 21, 2025, a State search warrant was signed by Cuyahoga County Judge Stephen Gall for the Extended Stay America Premier Suites, 6025 Jefferson Drive, Independence, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, 44131 room 605.

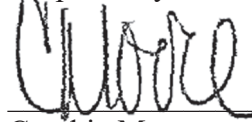
23. Search warrant revealed 20 grams of cocaine which was tested with TruNarc thermoscientific direct laser scan. The test revealed a positive result for Cocaine. Also, 159 grams of cocaine which was also tested with TruNarc thermoscientific direct laser scan. The test revealed a positive result for Cocaine. Also recovered was a scale, ammunition, a vacuum sealer,

body armor, numerous passports and ID's, five pounds of marijuana, black kilo bags which was identical to the kilo bag recovered from the highway that VALDEZ threw out of the car window and black rubber which is consistent with a kilo casket wrap.

CONCLUSION

24. Based on your Affiant's training, experience, and the facts set forth in this Affidavit, and information gathered from throughout this investigation, your Affiant believes that there is probable cause to believe that in the Northern District of Ohio, Eastern Division, JOEL VALDEZ committed the offense of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a), distribution and possession with intent to distribute controlled substances and Title 18, United States Code, Section 924 (c), Possession of a firearm in the furtherance of Drug Trafficking.

Respectfully,



Cynthia Moore
Task Force Officer
Federal Bureau of Investigation

This affidavit was sworn to by the affiant by telephone after a PDF was transmitted by email, per Fed. R. Crim P. 4.1, 41(d)(3) on this 22nd day of January, 2025.



Reuben J. Sheperd, United States Magistrate Judge